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ABSTRACT

Curriculum is enriched in relevant and unique ways by field trips which allow real world practice for skills learned in the classroom. Field trips offer teachers many opportunities to provide essential, concrete, hands-on learning experiences for students. Subject matter barriers dissolve in the interdisciplinary nature and context of the field trip. Walking tours are special field trips which can be conducted in relatively short time periods on or close to the school campus. Discussed in this guide discusses considerations and procedures; lists suggested walking tours; and details two sample walking tours, one to a water site (e.g., a pond) and the other to a field. Sensory and environmental awareness activities and language arts follow-up activities are described. A list of 23 resource materials is included. (CW)

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WALKING TOUR GUIDE

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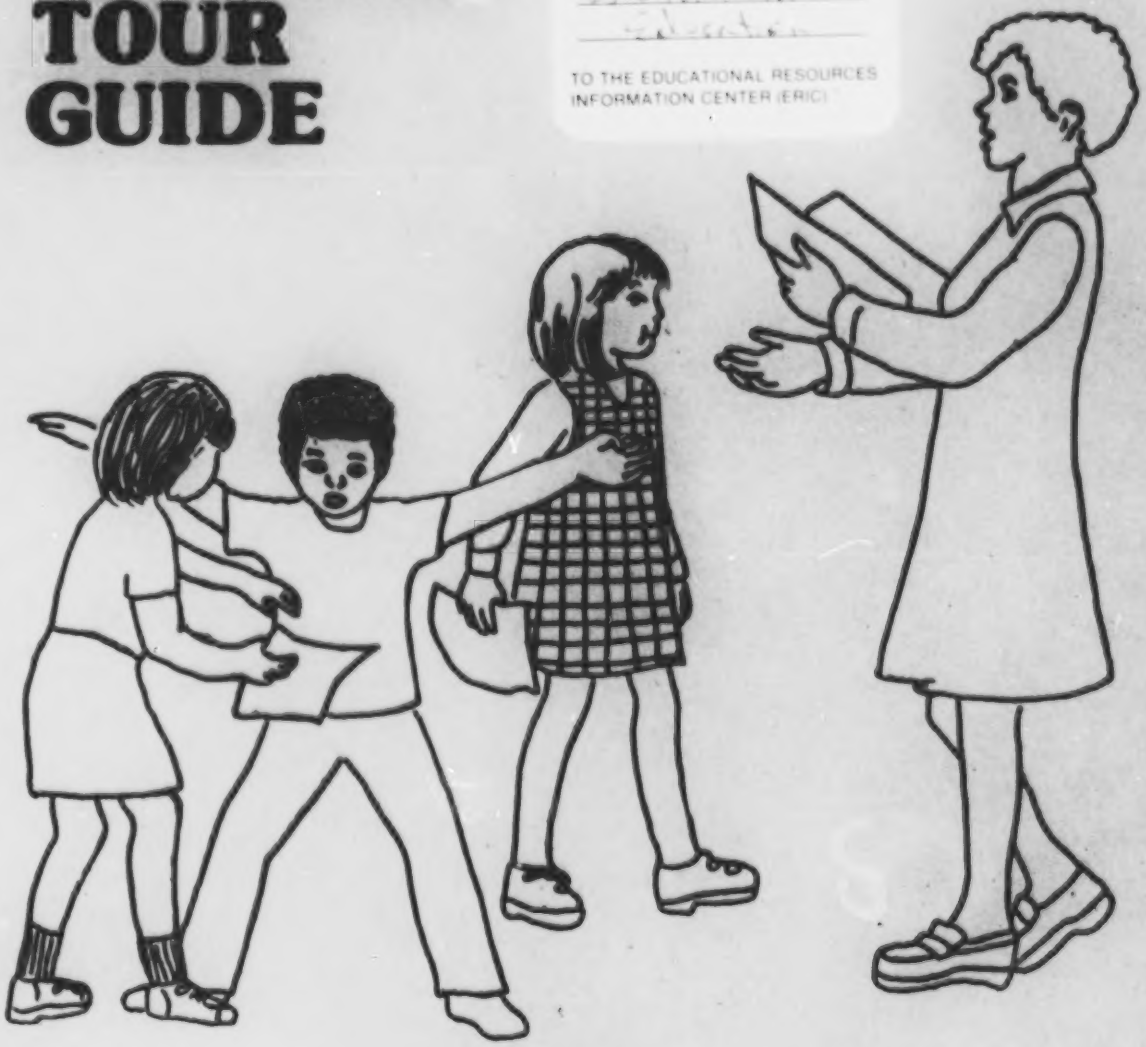

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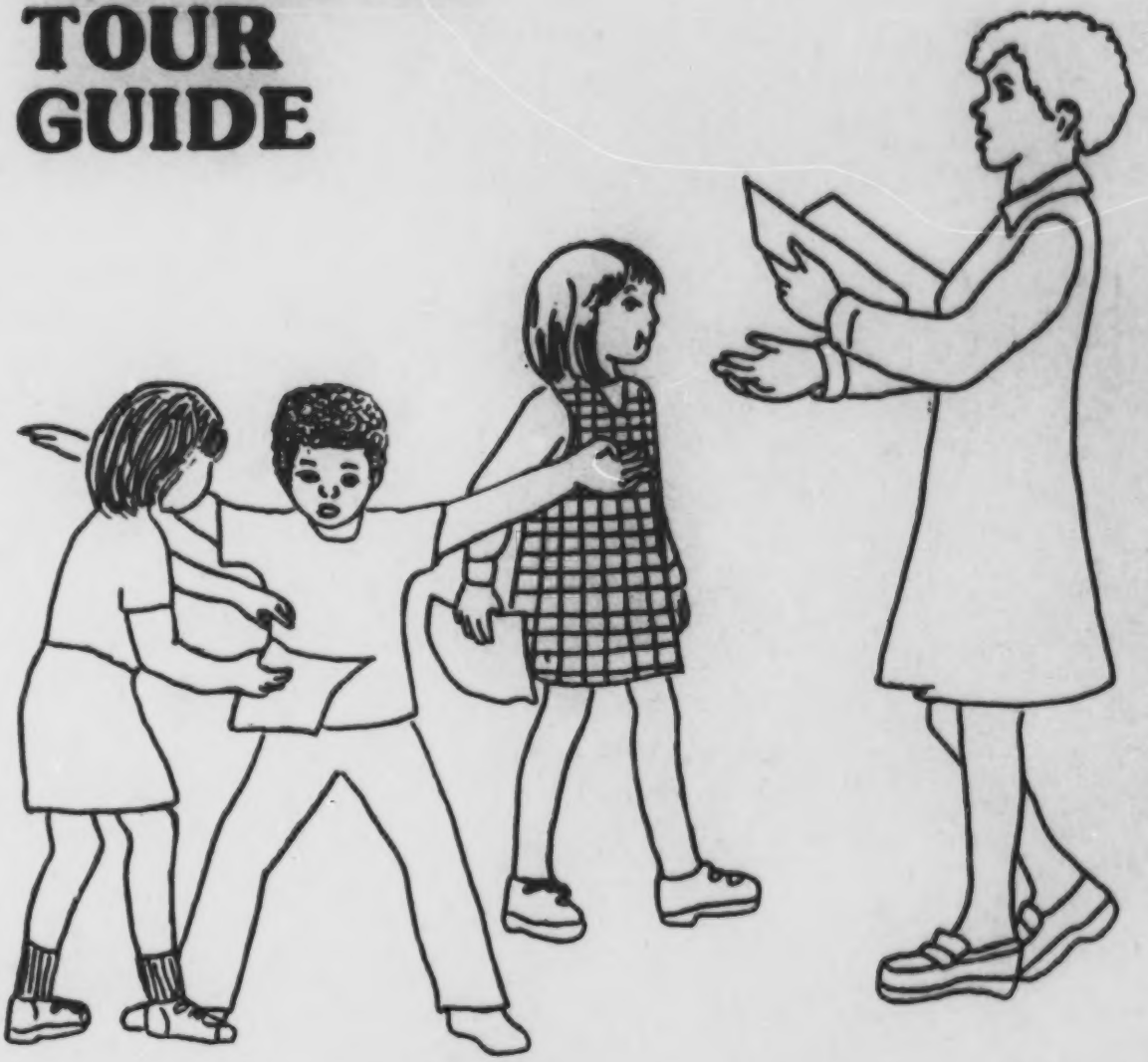

Special thanks to Beth and Greg Gehringer for the work they did on the WALKING TOUR GUIDE.

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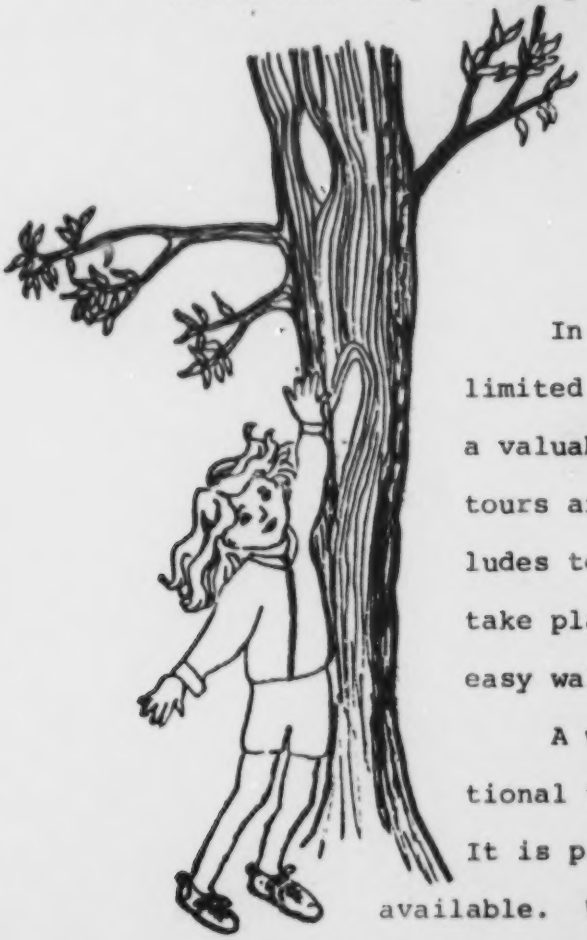
OVERVIEW

Curriculum is enriched in relevant and unique ways by field trips which allow real world practice for skills learned in the classroom. Field trips offer teachers many opportunities to provide essential, concrete, hands-on learning experiences for students. Subject matter barriers dissolve in the interdisciplinary nature and context of the field trip. Field experiences help students discover how to learn from their environment as they develop life-long learning skills and an appreciation and a desire for knowing. Walking tours are special field trips which can be conducted in relatively short time periods on or close to the school campus.

INTRODUCTION

Walking tours can be used to build awareness of local resources; they can help develop pride in school and neighborhood. Since each school and each neighborhood is different, the walking tour helps students recognize the individuality which makes their school unique.



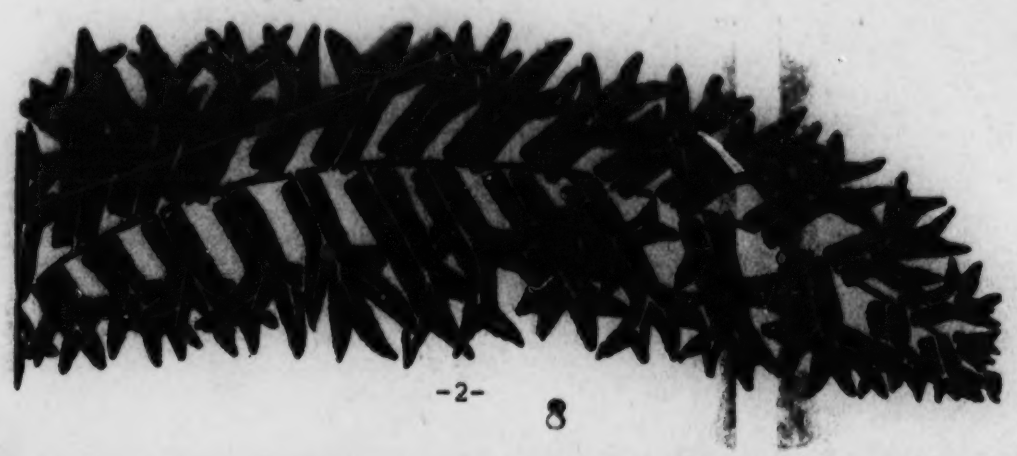
In these times of reduced budgets and limited fuel reserves, the walking tour is a valuable instructional option. Walking tours are excellent alternatives or preludes to transported field trips since they take place on the school campus or within easy walking distance of the school.

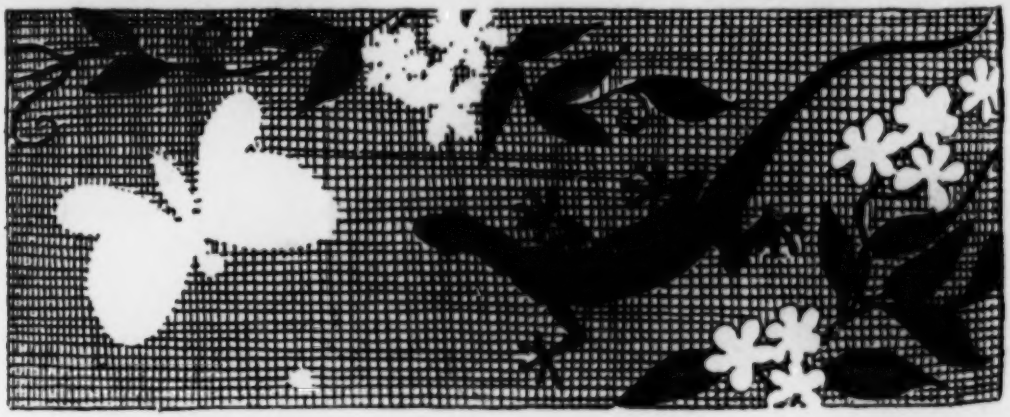
A walking tour can optimize instructional time as well as save money and fuel. It is planned for the instructional time available. Walking tours can be conducted in an hour, in five to ten minutes, for a half day or for an entire day.

The walking tour offers teachers the richness of "real-world" resources. The abstractions of print, language and secondhand classroom images can become concrete environmental experiences. In addition to allowing students to practice skills in a new environment, walking tours offer the teacher a highly motivating context for introducing new concepts.

Walking tours can be used by everyone in every grade. Such a trip can be used by kindergarten classes to introduce an awareness of "what's out there" - shapes, colors, tracks, and textures; to become more familiar with where everything is located in the school; to introduce the principal, the kitchen staff, the school nurse; etc. A middle school or high school class can use the walking tour as an opportunity for creative writing, drawing, transect studies, analysis of traffic flows in the school area, energy analysis, or as a firsthand experience with a concept being taught in class.

Students often associate excitement and fun with the outdoors and associate work with the classroom. This perception can provide the stimulus or student motivation for experiencing new discoveries and interests in a concept or the learning process.





Walking tours are easy to conduct if properly planned. Start with the idea that the tour will be a positive and an enjoyable experience. Remember that students will learn concepts by discovery, observation, and application. Curriculum ties and instructional impact should receive primary attention in the planning and conducting of a walking tour. Every walking tour should focus on one or two key concepts related to district and state subject matter objectives.

HOW TO BEGIN

Begin with three to five minute experiences with the whole class. To pattern the required behavior expected of students, have them practice behavioral expectations under low risk, controlled conditions. Give specific assignments and specific boundaries and time limits. Work up to ten minutes on campus experiences to collect data, inspire thoughts, or observe something. Eventually, your students (and you) will become more comfortable outside the classroom. After initial positive experiences, whole periods can be spent out of the classroom and on campus. Watch the students and note any physical or behavioral limitations which they exhibit. These limitations are important factors in planning a successful walking tour and selecting sites for the learning experience.

Select the site(s) for walking tours and design activities with the physical, behavioral, and learning characteristics of your students in mind. If you want to go to a grocery store that is a mile away, begin with some shorter outings. Prepare your class physically and establish your behavioral and educational objectives and expectations. Knowing what is expected gives students the chance to behave appropriately.

CONSIDERATIONS AND PROCEDURES

Walking tours are more likely to be successful experiences if teachers understand policies regarding them and the logistics involved in their planning and implementation.

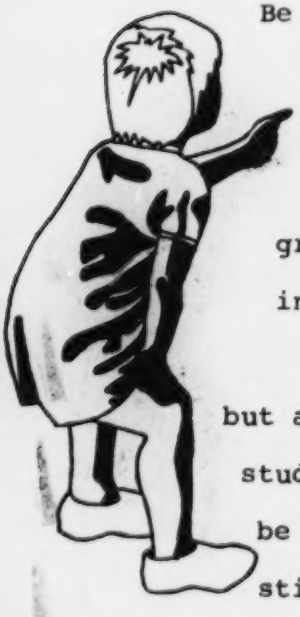
No student can be denied access to public school educational opportunities because of an inability to pay. Therefore, individual students are not allowed to pay fees associated with field trips or walking tours. No student should be faced with the embarrassment of asking for subsidized admission. Teachers can use alternative funding means for student trips. A school's internal funds or monies from parent organizations or projects such as bake sales can be used to finance a trip. Business and community organizations may sponsor instructional trips. A variety of local civic groups and clubs such as the Junior Welfare League, the Optimist Club, Rotary Clubs, garden clubs, Jaycees, and the Audubon Society have offered financial assistance for school trips.

Parent permission slips must be secured for any tour which leaves the school grounds. These forms do not relieve the teacher of any liability, but do serve to indicate family

pre-knowledge of the trip and your efforts to plan a valuable instructional experience.

The recommended chaperon ratio for walking tours is one adult for every ten students. You may want to increase the number of adults, depending on the nature of your class and of the planned activities.

If you are leaving school grounds you should notify the property owners or managers of the sites you intend to visit. The best policy is to obtain a written statement that confirms permission to enter the property and conduct the trip. The site visit confirmation can be facilitated by sending an advance thanking letter and including a self-addressed envelope with a pre-written permission letter which needs to be signed. You may also wish to inform the site owners/managers of your instructional objectives since they often offer you an on-site resource person or inform you about unique site facilities.



Be aware of potential trip hazards; walk through the trip by yourself before taking students on the tour. Make it clear that this is an instructional trip by designing meaningful and engaging activities. Your greatest risk is an accusation that you were negligent in planning and supervising the learning experience.

A walking tour can require extra effort on your part, but at the same time can provide many benefits for your students. You will discover that your second trip will be easier than the first, and your third will be easier still. Enjoy!

SUMMARY

Positive On-Campus Teaching/Learning Experience

A. Self-preparation:

1. Assess students' attention spans, previous experiences, needs for controls, skills in the language arts, etc.
2. Obtain permission for facility use (if necessary).
3. Familiarize yourself with the skills and content area.
4. Plan the "route" or area to be used and visit it - do a "dry run."
5. Formulate your expectations for accomplishments.

B. Student Preparation:

1. Introduce the experience by giving them a reason for it - a purpose.
2. Prepare them to observe carefully, make critical reviews, record accurately.
3. Assign specific responsibilities and tasks to every person.
4. Establish expectations about behavior and safety.
5. Make students feel it will be a special experience.

C. The Experience:

1. Show enthusiasm!
2. Set boundaries first!
3. Be the guide rather than the leader - ask leading questions.
4. Allow students enough time to complete their assignments, but keep the pace active and varied.
5. Watch for signs of changing interests.
6. Notice if the skills, tasks are easily completed...are the concepts too involved?
7. Encourage discovery, sensitivity, exploration - encourage more than one correct answer.
8. Use games, active experiments, art, and music to convey concepts!!

SUGGESTED WALKING TOURS

SUGGESTED WALKING TOURS

Instructional opportunities are abundant in walking tours. Many teachers have used those that follow to structure successful on or off campus trips. The following ideas are short walking tours requiring 10 to 30 minutes to complete.

FIVE SENSES IN NATURE (10 minutes)

Go outdoors. Establish boundaries. Have your class observe and mentally record their surroundings for five to ten minutes. Return to the classroom and ask the students to list what they can recall, placing their observations under the following headings: seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, and feeling. The lists should then be discussed and additions, subtractions, and changes should be made.

CREATIVE WRITING (20 minutes)

Walk your students outside and have them form a circle around a particular object such as a tree, a flower, or any thing you find interesting. Ask the students to sit, silently looking at the object in front of them. After they have observed the object for a minute or two, have them write five adjectives (or descriptive words) about the object. Next, have the students write a story, poem, or paragraph about the object, using their five adjectives. Allow students to write for 10 - 15 minutes, and then share their stories in small groups.

With primary students, you may have them draw the object as they see it from their perspective, and orally tell a story about the picture.

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS (10 - 15 minutes)

Take your students out on the campus and have them discover objects relating to texture, shape, density, temperature, and size. Provide a work sheet using the following categories and words. The work sheet should have enough room for students to write names of objects that are described by the words.

Size: heavy, thick, short, tall, small, large, narrow, big, little, miniature, etc.

Shape: oval, round, lobed, toothed, ridged, oblong, square, triangular, smooth-edged, pointed, curved, etc.

Texture: furry, hairy, waxy, knobbed, ribbed, soft, hard, slimy, velvety, coarse, slick, etc.

Density: solid, thick, lumpy, hollow, compact, spongy, porous, nonporous.

Temperature: cold, hot, moist, wet, dry, clammy, damp, cool, lukewarm, etc.

How many of these words could be used to describe objects in one square meter of the campus? How many could be used to describe a tree? A building? A sidewalk? A weed area?

SHADOW GAMES (10 minutes)

Shadow games help small children to understand both shadows and the sun. Ask the children to make a circle. Tell them to make their shadows touch their hands, dance, be very still, stoop, touching one foot, and stoop, touching both feet. The children can also try to make a shadow climb a wall, stand on a tree shadow, or they can try to make their own shadow disappear.

MEASURING WITH SHADOWS (30 - 45 minutes)

Older students can measure many large objects with shadows, since the size of the shadow is directly proportional to the size of the object. Thus, if a 12-inch ruler held perpendicular to the ground throws an 8-inch shadow, and a tree shadow is 18 and ½ feet (222 inches) long, the tree will be 27 and 3/4 feet tall (the height of the ruler is to the length of its shadow as the height of the trees is to its shadow, or 12 inches is to 8 inches as the height of the tree is to 222 inches, or 12"/8" = tree height/222", or 222" x 12"/8" = tree height, or 333" = tree height, or 27 3/4' = tree height). Calculate the height of trees or the flagpole on campus.

Sites for walking tours can be numerous. Here are a few suggestions that have proven successful and effective for others:

Gardens
Vacant lots
Forests

Drainage ditches
Creeks
Rivers
Canals
Ponds
Beaches
Marinas
Yacht Basin

Power company
Electricity substations
Telephone company
Water treatment plant
Sewage treatment plant

Airport
Bus station
Bus stop

Parks
Wildlife areas
Boardwalks
Farms

School cafeteria
Custodian's closet
Boiler room
School library
Principal's office
Package sewage plant

Public library
Local museums
Post office
Police station
Fire station
Courthouse
City Hall

Humane Society
Veterinary clinic
Hospital
Doctor's office
Dental office

Garden center
Bank
Grocery
Bakery
Restaurant
Shopping center
Mall
Office building
Gas station
Lumber yard

SAMPLE WALKING TOURS

Water Walking Tour

Place: Nearest canal/ditch/pond.

Theme: Water

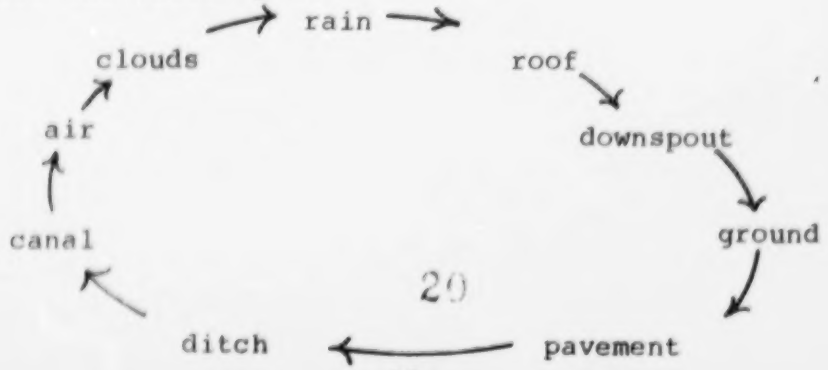
Before leaving the class, have students close their eyes and raise their hands when they know what you are describing.

It's something in a pond.
Usually very flat.
Sometimes it's ripply.
You can put your feet in it.
It feels wet.
Sometimes there are bubbles in it.
You can drink it.
It starts with a "w" sound.
It's _____! (WATER!)

While walking to the canal, pond, or ditch, have students look for water catchers, things that can hold water. Some water catchers might be:

storm drain
roof
tin can
bicycle seat
hole in pavement
ditch beside road
etc.

Just before getting to the canal, pond, or ditch, sit in a circle and discuss the water cycle:



Use water cycle creative dramatics. Help students act out the water cycle as if each were a raindrop.

Have students view the canal from the top of the bank while you fill a bucket with water from the canal, ditch, or pond.

Ask the students to form a circle. Place the bucket of water in the center of the circle. Pass out "water catchers" to each of the students. Have students pretend to be scientists and test their "water catchers" to see which one(s) hold(s) the most water:

- cup
- flower pot
- napkin
- wash cloth
- dip net
- moss
- rope
- canvas sieve
- rubber hose
- plastic vial
- snail shell
- leaf
- etc.

Hand out one half sheet of scrap paper to each student. Ask the students to try to catch water with their papers. Give them a chance to dip their paper water catcher into the bucket to see if it will hold water.

Hand out a second half sheet of scrap paper to each student. Show the class how to fold it into a small cup. Allow each student to try the new catcher. (If you pour the water into the new cups, it goes a lot faster than if each student dips into the bucket.)

On the way back to class look for an air plant and discuss how this plant catches its own water.

Have students draw pictures of things that will catch water.

If there are plants in the canal, pond, or ditch, you may collect some and have students look at them and talk about why they grow there.

If you have a net available, you can catch some small fish or insects that live in the water and let the students see them. Discuss why these animals live in water and what they could eat there.

Equipment:

- bucket
- variety of water catchers for testing
- about 50 half sheets of scrap paper
- dip net (optional) and jar

Field Walking Tour

Grades K and 1 - This walking tour can be expanded and adapted for older students.

Place: A field near the school.

Theme: A special habitat - a field.

Before leaving the class, have students draw a picture of their favorite animal and then think about what that animal eats. Ask the students to draw the animal's food and its source of water. Finally, have the students draw the animal's shelter.

Discuss how all living things have homes (places that have food, water, and shelter). Tell the students that the kind of "home" they will visit today is a special place where many animals live. Ask them to guess what this place is called after you give the following clues:

It is a place where many animals live.
The sun shines there and makes it warm.
It is an open space without trees.
Sometimes wildflowers grow there.
Mice and snakes sometimes live there.
It starts with a "f" sound.

It is a _____! (FIELD!)

Talk with the students about fields. Before you go outside, set the rules and boundaries for the outdoor activities.

On the way out to the field nearest your school, have students look for animal signs (tracks, nests, food, scat, etc.).

When you reach the field, ask the students to form a circle and play "Duplication." (This is a memory game which helps the students practice observing things.)

Hide an object from the field such as a blade of grass or a twig, under a scarf or bandana. Tell the students that you will uncover the objects for 10 seconds. Then re-cover the object and (within boundaries) have students try to find an object exactly like the one they saw under the cloth. Repeat this with two, then three, objects.

Have students look for things animals might eat. Play "Field Food Finding." Scatter cards representing food for different animals throughout the field. You should have five or six cards of one color for each animal. Choose animals that live in fields, such as snake, hawk, grasshopper, mouse, turtle, and rabbit. Divide the class into several small groups, each group representing one animal. After giving boundaries, send the students off to hunt for "food" (like an Easter egg hung). The only "food" they can pick up is the color representing their particular animal (e.g. snake - red cards, rabbit - blue cards, etc.). After a few minutes have students get into their original groups and count their cards to see if they found enough "food" to survive. Discuss what kind of food each animal might find in the field.

After they have eaten, animals get thirsty. Where do they find water? Have students look for sources of water. They might lay on the ground and look at the clouds while you discuss rain. Do a guided imagery about a rain storm.

After the rain storm imagery, ask students where the animals might hide from the rain. Find a cozy place at the edge of the field (with bushes if possible) to take the students to hide (shelter). Have students close their eyes and count silently the number of different sounds they hear.

Return to the open field and have students form a circle. Ask each student to choose an animal that would live in or near the field and pantomime some of its characteristics for the class.

Return to the classroom and give students a chance to draw pictures or write stories about fields and what they learned about these unique habitats.

Equipment:

bandana or scarf
paper and crayons
food cards - 3" x 3" construction paper, five different colors, about 30 pieces.

RESOURCES

ON-CAMPUS/OUTDOOR CLASSROOM RESOURCES

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This publication is one of the teaching units in the community studies series developed by the Lee County Schools, Florida.

The community studies series is designed to assist teachers and students in learning through experience how the Lee County communities function, and the rights and responsibilities each of us shares in maintaining a healthy, productive community.

By systematically experiencing our community, students tend to see the pattern that connects the natural and cultural environment, and how each of us is an independent agent for change.

The community study instructional units have been field tested by teachers and students.

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